

WASTE 2 RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMITTEE
**** MEETING SUMMARY ****
November 20, 2012, 9:30 a.m.

John Sherman, Acting Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. Introductions were made. John asked for a motion to approve the September 18, 2012 meeting notes. There was a motion to adopt them. The motion was seconded and the notes were approved.

Please note: Sego Jackson wanted to ensure his comments regarding C&D (LEED, etc.) were included in the September notes and he also clarified them. Susanne confirmed the comments were included in the notes. It was later noticed the flipchart notes document was inconsistent, so she revised the document and posted it to the W2RAC website with materials for this meeting.

Discussion on Waste Reduction, Recycling, and Litter Control Account (WRRLCA)

Purpose and Ground Rules – Jane Dewell, Jeanne Fulcher

Jeanne reviewed the ground rules established in July:

- Turn off phones and BlackBerries.
- Express ideas openly and honestly.
- Work together.
- No side conversations.
- Engage and listen.
- Raise hands.
- Respect differences.

Summarize November 8 Conference Call – Laurie Davies, Janine Bogar

Janine said the conference call was brief. Only waste reduction and recycling activities were reviewed, not all program activities. Most questions during the conference call were about clarifying how much the WRRLCA activities are of our total program dollars (14 percent), C&D work, and the 1-800-Recycle Hotline. We also got some thanks for undergoing this process.

Jan Gee asked if the 14 percent represents only WRRLCA funding. The answer was no. The waste reduction and recycling activities on the chart represent 14 percent of the program's total funding.

Summarize WRRLCA Funded Activities - In Favor/Not in Favor – Jane Dewell, Jeanne Fulcher

Jane recapped the Committee's September 18 discussion on activities they favored or did not favor for the WRRLCA 30 percent funding. She reviewed the flipchart notes document (posted on the W2RAC website for this meeting) summarizing feedback on the activities.

Group Exercise: Multi-voting and Priorities – Jane Dewell, Jeanne Fulcher

Jane explained the multi-voting process. Only committee members could vote. Ecology staff participating in the meeting could not. Gene Eckhardt (WUTC) declined to vote, because he does not believe that one state agency should tell another what to do.

Each committee member was given 15 votes (represented by colored dots) to cast on 29 activities posted around the Lacey conference room. Committee members couldn't cluster more than three votes on a particular activity. After voting, Jane and Jeanne would include votes from other meeting locations, and group programs and look for trends: those activities clearly lower or higher priority, and those in the middle. It was agreed that absent members could do multi-voting after the meeting by the next week.

Laurie Davies suggested that members and their alternates should only get one combined vote representing their stakeholder group. The group agreed.

Sego Jackson asked about what we plan to do with the results of the exercise. Laurie Davies said Ecology will generate a report. She said the Office of Financial Management is aware of this effort, and the report will be shared with them. Laurie also said this won't be the end of discussions on the activities.

Sego also asked if this prioritization is just for next biennium. Laurie said that we're not putting an end date on this.

Suellen Mele clarified whether the results of this exercise won't mean favored activities will be funded. Laurie Davies said in tight funding times we have to make tough decisions on some activities that would be "nice to do."

Vicki Christophersen commented that if activities required by statute don't get votes it could mean we need to change the statute.

Sego Jackson asked for clarification on if the voting is only for activities funded by WRRLCA 30 percent. Jane Dewell said yes.

After the committee spent time voting, Jane Dewell explained next steps: agreement on highest and lowest priorities. In terms of trends, Jane said activities with five or fewer votes may be a place to look.

Jane noted that the "State Solid Waste Planning" category didn't have any votes in the Lacey room, and asked if people didn't understand that this was an activity to vote on. The group agreed they were confused because it looked like a title, not a separate activity. A hand vote (allowing one-vote for each hand) was taken and votes were added to "State Solid Waste Planning."

Some committee members commented they did not vote for activities that could receive MTCA funds, even if they supported them, since they felt the WRRLCA 30 percent funds weren't as critical for MTCA-supported programs.

Sego Jackson said he would hate for anyone to take out of this meeting that education in schools isn't important. The school awards activity just needs a reboot (parking lot issue).

Laurie Davies said she thinks the Information Clearinghouse is a good tool, if done the right way.

Suellen Mele said she would interpret the 1-800-Recycle Hotline the same way. She knew it had E-cycle funding so she didn't vote much for it. Laurie Davies mentioned the hotline uses primarily E-Cycle funding because the majority of calls we get are for that activity.

Suellen also said she struggled with voting on rule development, because it's vague. Some rules are required and some are not, and there could be appropriate times to utilize WRRLCA. Laurie Davies said we still have to prioritize what rules we work on, and one rule development we did (compost) was driven by current issues. The individual working on it was funded by WRRLCA.

Jan Gee echoed support for the 1-800-Recycle Hotline and school awards. She talked about the importance of educating youth and doing consumer education.

Jane Dewell said even though some activities got fewer votes, it doesn't mean they aren't up for future discussion.

Cal Palmer pointed out that tough choices have to be made in tighter budget times. We need to discuss those activities that may need to fall off the plate (five or fewer votes).

At this point Jane listed the top five activities with the highest votes:

- Technical assistance to locals and businesses.
- Product specific programs.
- Transporting recyclables.
- Building material reuse and recycling.
- Financing the solid waste system.

Jan Gee said the vast majority of building materials are not taxed under WRRLCA, so she has very strong feelings that WRRLCA should not fund those recycling programs. There should be another source of funding, or proposals to tax building materials should go to the Legislature.

Suellen Mele said she struggles with the fact that the program's C&D activities have no direct funding. If Ecology doesn't fund the activity as it historically has, it will be unfunded.

Rick Havlaka agreed that many activities cannot generate their own funding.

Jan Gee mentioned that some activities are broader and include taxed products.

Jane Dewell asked if this issue should be addressed by a subcommittee. Laurie Davies said we need to have policy discussions about the overarching purpose of the account and what it should and shouldn't fund, rather than see decisions made in the back end of a budget.

Suellen Mele talked about last year's carpet bill, which is a subset of C&D, and how it is categorized as product stewardship, which would create a more direct funding source for carpet.

Vicki Christophersen asked if our report will say the group is unanimous. She doesn't think product specific programs should be a priority. Laurie said the report will be specific about the voting exercise and all issues that were raised. Our summary will include that this is at the top of the votes, but there is no consensus. Vicki said with our limited dollars, product stewardship isn't the top priority.

Rich McConaghy talked about mapping and recycling. This seems more important than just a geographic map. It can tell us where materials go.

Cal Palmer pointed out that 2 activities received 19 votes: technical assistance to locals on organics, and local solid and hazardous waste planning.

Suellen Mele noted there is a clump of votes in the 16-19 group, then a drop-off to 10 and 12.

Jan Gee doesn't interpret product specific programs as product stewardship. She opposes any product stewardship that isn't a toxic product. Laurie Davies said some of our work related to products, such as carpet, is routine technical assistance covered by our current funding sources. We've said if you want a product stewardship bill, you need to fully fund it so no WRRLCA dollars need to be spent.

Sego Jackson was thinking product stewardship is one tool for product specific work and there are other tools as well. Packaging and products are difficult to separate as categories. Almost all that goes into the garbage is a product or package, or both, at some point.

Suellen Mele wanted to know if an activity becomes a product stewardship law if it is no longer funded with WRRLCA. Laurie Davies used mercury lights as an example. Once a product stewardship becomes law, WRRLCA shouldn't fund it.

Vicki Christophersen said product stewardship activities should not be included in the WRRLCA 30 percent funding – only “hands on the ground” activities such as helping local governments increase recycling.

Art Starry made a suggestion that it would be helpful in the final report on this effort to include assumptions and interpretation, e.g. knowing how we interpret the term “product specific programs.” Knowing how Ecology plans to take this information forward will be important.

Vicki Christophersen asked if “packaging” means product stewardship. Laurie said the activities are around plastic bags, wrap, etc. She gave examples that included responding to legislative proposals, working with local governments, and participation on EPA’s National Packaging Task Force.

Sego Jackson said the prioritization effort didn’t necessarily mean putting more money into activities.

Cal Palmer asked if the activities with the highest votes will rise to the top, such as technical assistance.

Laurie Davies said in terms of the WRRLCA 30 percent we have a small number of staff that follow recycling issues. In the case of recent budget provisos, we had to eventually either look at laying people off or have them work on other activities.

Cal Palmer asked if this gives her confidence that resources available to do the work are adequate. Laurie said most say they are inadequate.

Jody Snyder asked what we plan to do with the committee’s input. Laurie said the input is advice we’ll weigh when we’re budgeting.

Rick Hlavka said if Ecology is going to issue a report that says we have high and low priorities, with 29 activities it should be more balanced, such as having one-third high, one-third medium and one-third low.

Suellen Mele pointed out that those activities that ranked 16-19 were pretty high priorities. She has interest in the commingled study. She talked about Shannon McClelland launching conversations on commingling in the Northwest Region and how stimulating the conversation was.

Matt Henry said he’s more interested in after activities are funded, how the committee will be engaged in them. He assumes most items will get funding, but there are opinions on both sides. How will the group be engaged to provide input? He suggested a subcommittee on product specific programs and packaging.

Jerry Smedes observed we aren’t looking for a precise vote, just a concentration of interest/disinterest for Laurie to take into consideration.

Jan Gee said when we produce the report on this effort, she hopes we’ll define what some of the terms mean. Laurie Davies agreed there isn’t enough definition of some like product specific programs, but the group should define this in its next steps.

Wayne Krafft said one thing we should consider is that under organics management, fuels research ranked low, anaerobic digestion, etc. ranked higher, yet they are interrelated.

Vicki Christophersen said she assumes we've done an agency budget request and asked if Laurie Davies would provide it to the committee with the working notes. Laurie said she would. She asked for a full restoration of WRRLCA and to get the litter work back.

Define Next Steps – Laurie Davies, Janine Bogar, Jane Dewell

Jane Dewell will work on the first draft of the report on the committee's prioritization effort. It will be finalized soon.

Meeting adjourned at 11:55 a.m.

Submitted by: Susanne McLemore